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2003 AIMS TEST RESULTS SHOW IMPROVEMENT IN MATH SCORES, MIXED RESULTS IN READING & WRITING

HORNE STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE, TEACHING TO STANDARDS

PHOENIX (September 2, 2003) – Arizona’s Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne today released the 2003 results of the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) Test. The data show a statewide across-the-board increase in mathematics proficiency at all grade levels, and indicated mixed results for reading and writing.

“The increase in math scores at every grade level tested is good news,” Horne said. “And I’m confident that the areas in which progress was not made will improve next year. Many of the students who took the AIMS Test last year knew that there would be no consequence because passing the test wasn’t essential to graduating high school. That’s changed. Beginning with the current class of high school sophomores, passing the AIMS Test will be mandatory before getting a diploma. That will be a tremendous incentive in the coming years.”

The AIMS Test ranks students in four categories: 1. Falls Far Below the standard, 2. Approaches the standard, 3. Meets the standard, and, 4. Exceeds the standard.

For mathematics, in all grade levels, the percentage of students who met or exceeded the standard increased in a range from one percent in 8th grade to three percent in 3rd 5th and 10th grades. There were no decreases in math scores at all.

In reading, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard increased by three percent in 3rd grade; there was a decrease of one percent in grades 5 and 8, five percent in the 10th grade. With sophomores about to experience consequences for this test for the first time in the '03-'04 school year, these scores are expected to increase.

For the writing category, the percentage of students who met or exceeded the standards increased three percent in the 8th grade, six percent in the 10th grade, and decreased one percent in the 3rd grade and three percent in the 5th grade.

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Arizona Department of Education AIMS results news release page 2

Horne added that since being sworn into office in January 2003, the mission of the Arizona Department of Education has changed, and he expects to see better test results in the future.

“The Arizona Department of Education has an intense focus on having schools use the best teaching practices, improve ability to interpret data, and are teaching the standards that are tested in AIMS. The Department has held seven regional seminars to help schools implement these methods, and I’m committed to sending solutions teams to schools that most need to improve their scores,” he added.

“The AIMS Test has special significance because it tests materials the students have been taught. Massachusetts has a high-stakes test similar to AIMS, and their graduation rate is 90 percent. Studies showed that the ten percent who didn’t graduate had poor attendance records. Our message to parents is: If you send your children to school and they do their homework, they will learn the standards and pass AIMS. If they don’t come to school, we can’t teach them.”

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Note: To access the statewide breakout, please go to the Arizona Department of Education website at www.ade.az.gov. You will then need to click on the Statistics, Research and Reports link. That will take you to the “Test Results Information” link. From there, go to the “AIMS Results by” link. That will take you to the “AIMS Report Wizard.” **Remember that the other links above the “Wizard” are data from *last year*.** The 2003 summaries, etc. are not prepared yet. Once you’re in the wizard, follow the instructions to obtain the data you want.